CATS NEWSLETTER

The Official Journal of the Capital Area Timex/Sinclair Users Group

Presidential Ramblings

When you get this, the holidays will be almost over and no longer will "visions of sugarplums dance in your heads". Instead you'll be thinking, perhaps, of the bills to come.

Another item to cogitate about and one which deserves your fullest attention as a CATS member is, "Quo vadis?" Whither goest thou? and, by extension, whither go we? Or should that be wither, which it seems to me that we are doing, which, by the by, leads me to this REMINDER; dues for the coming year are again due so unlimber your pens (which probably are well-practiced after writing all your contribution checks to charitable organizations) and get one off in the mail to Treasurer Barry Washington who will be happy, nay, ecstatic, to provide you with a receipt unless you tell him that your cancelled check will serve. If you'd rather deal in cash, bring same to the next meeting.

Back to the dropped theme. As we are all wondering just what the future holds for our country, what with the victory of those advocating "change", I, for one, am wondering what comes next for our group.

I cannot but be impressed by the fact that prior to the last election, the nominating committee found only two persons willing to run for office (in addition to the Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary who volunteered to continue in office). We have operated since July '91 without a Recording Secretary and since July

'92 without a 2nd Vice President whose primary task is to arrange for presentations for our meetings. Does that mean that we can continue indefinitely without those slots being filled?

Now, we have just had no takers (willing) for Editor, making it necessary to fall back on a previous editor who, reluctantly, agreed to assume the task IF no one else popped up so we now have one CATS member doing double duty, out of the goodness of his heart so that we have a chance of continuing to function. This ain't no way to run a railroad!

I can only hope that our next session will produce some answers to the problems. Ideas and action are required.

Let me close with a quote of some words from a recent QUANTA edition. "...some groups have regular lectures and formal talks on varying subjects. We have had them in the past, but we do find it very difficult to find volunteers who are wiling to give such talks. It is a pity because I am sure some people in our area who (sic) do have subjects, projects or new or old hardware and software that they would like to show off. I know of a lot of people who want to listen as well."

The article the excerpt is from was entitled "WHY BOTHER?" You supply the answer.

Come on out and help CATS start a Happy New Year.

Contents

Key Dates

9 January: CATS Meeting
    11:00 Workshop
    1:30 Executive Board Meeting
    2:00 General Meeting

25 January: Tentative Newsletter Deadline
         For the Next Issue

13 February : CATS Meeting

Meeting Subject

Since we do not have a Second Vice-President to arrange speakers, the next meeting will be spent brainstorming over topics and speakers for the next year. Do you have something that you could talk about at a meeting?

From The Editor:

Now is the time for me to take my bow and exit stage left. This will be the last CATS newsletter that I'll edit. I pass the reins to Mark Fisher, our new editor, by default.

Looking back, I've been editor for just over two and a half years. In that time I've gotten married and had a daughter. All of this, plus the CATS newsletter, plus the QL Hacker's Journal; I guess I have been busy.

I hope that Mark will not find the Newsletter to time consuming. Plus I hope that many will support Mark by writing many articles for him. An editors job is to put together the newsletter and, hopefully, not to write articles to fill it out. This is the time consuming part.

Even thought I am moving 9 hours away from DC, I don't feel that I am leaving the group. Since most of the Sinclair people in the US are scattered, we have survived by phone and letter. This is how I will keep in touch with my friends in CATS.

So, see you on the Internet, and hopefully I'll see some of you in Dayton at the next ComputerFest.

QLIPS
By Hugh Howie

This little snippet of a program is so beautiful I cannot understand why we have not found it long before this.

Remember all those windows we would like to get rid of when we change programs? The ones that overlap on the new windows? We do not want to do RESET as it might spoil something else; well this is called WINDEX, and just like the name of that wonderful blue stuff you are given in the spring and told GIT OUT THERE!!!! This little beauty will clean up all those fancy windows for you; well not really all, but most of them.

It will not get rid of those EXEC windows but is a dandy for the S/B (watch your langwidge) F1 windows.

It is not in the Library yet as I only received it recently, but it's gonna be one o'dem days.

WINDEX _BAS

```
100 REMark ==============================
105 REMark ********* WINDex_bas *********
110 REMark ==============================
115 :
120 REMark    Restores F1 Screen WINDOWs
125 REMark      #0, #1 and #2 to their
130 REMark    Normal values if they are
135 REMark "Trashed" by an unruly program
140 REMark    Contributed by Ed Kingsley
145 :
150 REMark  Extract and add the PROCedure
155 REMark  To your own graphic programs
160 REMark  & Games to clean your WINDOWs
165 :
170 REMark        LRUN WINDex_bas
175 :
200 windex
202 :
300 DEFine PROCedure windex
302 REMark ------------------
304 MODE 4
306 WINDOW#0,512,50,0,206:PAPER#0,0:INK#0,5:
    CSIZE#0,0,0
308 OPEN#1,con_256x202a256x0_128:PAPER#1,2:
    INK#1,7:BORDER#1,1,255:CSIZE#1,0,0
310 OPEN#2,con_256x202a0x0_128:PAPER#2,7:
    INK#2,2:BORDER#2,1,255:CSIZE#2,0,0
312 CLS#0:CLS#1:CLS#2
314 END DEFine windex              (022192)
```

Random Dot Stereograms
By Tim Swenson

Herb Schaaf introduced the group to Random Dot Stereograms (RDS) by demoing a program he wrote that generates them on the QL. The first one that I saw was a knot-like shape on the QL screen.

They way they work is something like this. Image an image composed of dots (like the monitor). To get a 3D image, one needs two images, one for each eye with slight variations to give the 3D effect. Around the turn of the century stereo viewers were sold that have two images like this. The same principle applies with the Kodak ViewMaster.

Since the two images are made of dots, they can be placed on top of one another, with space between the dots so that the two images do not interfere with each other.

Now you just have to relax your eys and let them focus behind the image and the eyes should see the two images as one and get the full 3D effect.
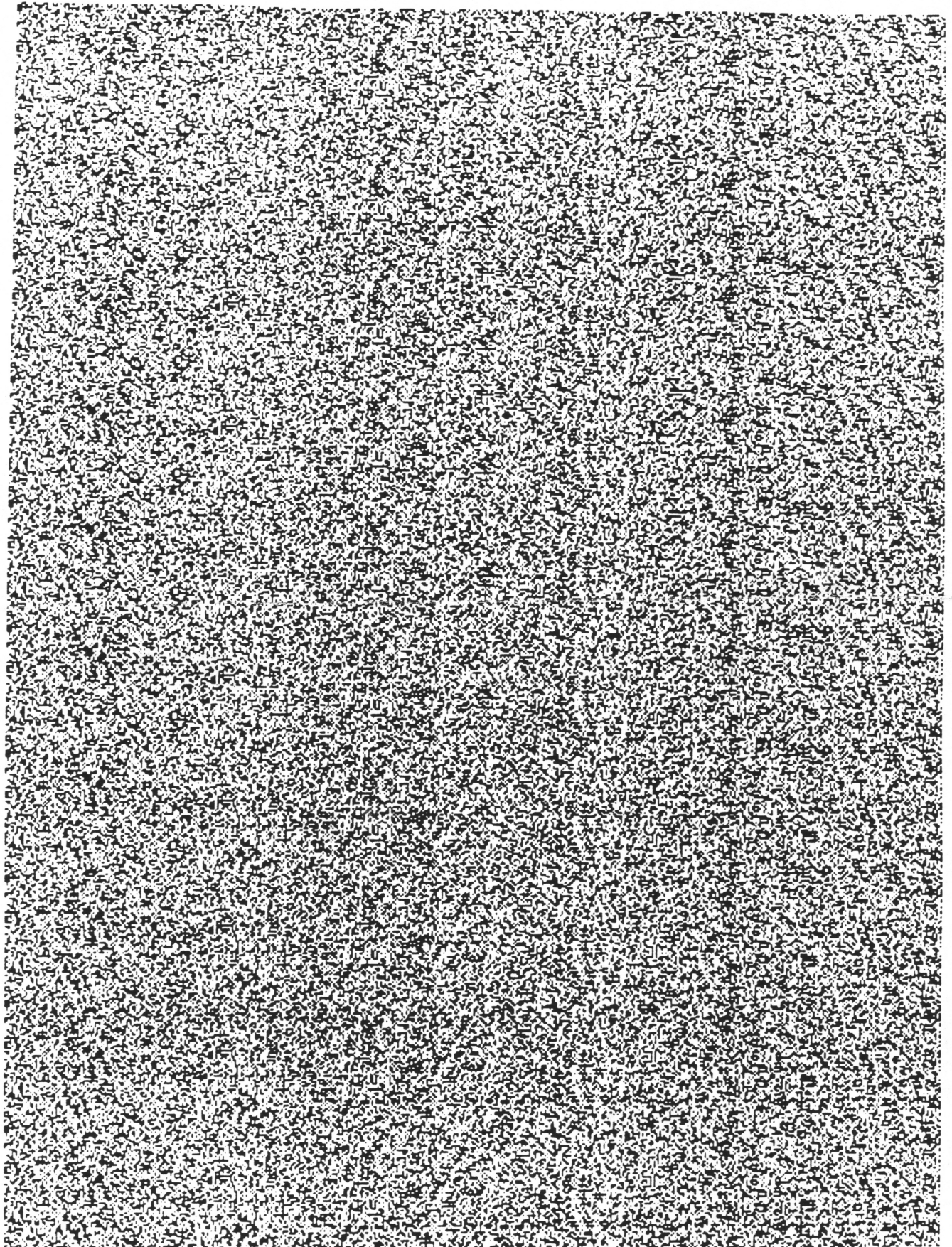
On each RDS there are two dots. The way to look at an RDS is to unfocus your eyes and see four dots (two from each eye). Now by playing with your focus, move the four dots to that two of them overlap and you see three dots. Your eyes are at the right focus to see the image. Keeping your eyes at the same focus, look up at the image, moving slowly.

It takes some time to see your first image, but once you get the hang of it, it takes no time at all.

The RDS in this issue was not created on a QL, but is a good example.

ToolKit II Help
By Hugh Howie

Recently I asked you to do some work with TK2 for your self. I also have been trying things with it, and have found a use I never expected to find.

Many may ask what value the DATA_USE function may have. Certainly once the defaults are designated it may be thought that that is the end of that, but that is not necessarily so; there are many ways in which DATA_USE may be utilised. The same as there are many ways any given TK2 function may be used. Have a look at what follows.

I am going to show how the commands in the above header to this article can all be combined, and used with effect.

I have too many disks lying around with too much space wasted in too many backups. I know we should all keep a back-up of everything but sometimes things get out of hand and that is what happened to me, I had too many disks chasing the same information, so I decided to consolidate the contents, And that is when my trouble started. This is my set up:-

```
QL #1 -Networked To- QL #2
1 x 3 1/2 720 Drive    1 x 5 1/4 720 Drive
1 x 3 1/2 1440  "      1 x 3 1/2 720   "
Printer                1 x 5 1/4 360   "
```

I used to have more disks drives, but while my fingers wandered idly over the noisy keys, my feet were getting caught up in pedals, so I removed some drives from each QL. Sure cut down on the draught from all them spinning drives.

My problem started when I wanted a hard copy of the directory on a 5 1/4 disk which meant using #2 QL through #1 QL. I know there are many ways to do this such as changing the drives around etc., but I didn't want to do that.

A lot has been written about the QL Network, but I was never able to make too much sense of a lot of it, which resulted in my having to devise my own methods. This is part of my experimentation. (I like that word - it takes up almost a whole line)

I tried to use the DIR \SER and the WSTAT \SER in various ways (remember I told you about them last time out?) Next I thought if I used DATA_USE command I could change the default from #1, to #2 machine, thus:-

DATA_USE N2_FLP1_

It worked! I was now able to get the stats of the disk in #2 flp1_ to the printer on #1 machine.

Problem was I still wanted to be able to use the default in #1 QL, so I decided to put the DATA_USE on an ALTKEY. In fact I could put two commands on Altkeys, one to put me into #2 QL and another to bring me back to #1.

ALTKEY "a","DATA_USE N2_FLP1_" To put me over, and :-

ALTKEY "k","DATA_USE FLP1_" to bring me back to #1.

In between the two Altkey commands, I could use **"WSTAT \SER"** or **"DIR \SER"** and this would allow me to print from #2 to the printer on #1. All being done with a minimum of key strokes. (I don't like to HIT my keys, they haven't done anything to hurt me!) (yet)

So now when I wanted a printout of flp1_ in #2, all I had to do was press **"<ALT> a"** and type **"WSTAT \SER"** to get my copy, then type **"<ALT> k"** and I was back to flp1_ of my #1 QL.

Now I know that it is not often I want to do this sort of thing, but if I cared to, I could incorporate the two ALTKEY commands in my boot program and they would always be there when I required them.

So there you are, I have done what I set out to do. I have used TK2 to set up the Network and the Data_use and Altkeys, and used them all from #1 QL, to send a DIRectory from flp1_ of #2 QL, to the printer on #1 QL.

Now what else can I adapt to my needs?

032692

Descriptive Directories

By Tim Swenson

I've recieved a number of QL disks that have what I would call descriptive directories. Instead of just listing the files, the directories have headers describing a group of files. Below is an example:

```
250/1400
Disk_Name

***** Text Files *****

file1_txt
file2_txt
file3_txt

***** Source Files ****

file1_bas
file2_bas
file3_bas
```

Disks organized like this are great for distribution disks. The headers give you an idea of what each group of files are. You don't have to open each file to get a rough idea of what it is.

Not knowing how to do this and thinking it must be a bit on the compilicated side (since I have not seen anybody on this side of the pond doing it). I asked a few people in Europe how to do this. I was suprised how simple the answer is.

To create a file like **** Text Files **** do the following:

```
OPEN_NEW #4,'**** Text Files
****'
CLOSE #4
```

Using the single quotes gets around QDOS parsing the file name and reporting it as an illegal name. It just takes whatever is in the quotes and creates a file with that name. One can also create a file with just spaces.

Be aware that each one of these files takes up disk space. Even though they are OK in size, they actually take up about 1K of disk space (the exact size escapes me at the moment). This will only be a problem is your disk is crowded to begin with.

This idea can also be used to delete files that have illegal QDOS names. A version of PKUNZIP for the QL does not translate the . extention to a _. So I had a bunch of files like file.ext. I had no way of deleting them. Now I do.

Meeting Notes

Only a short business meeting was engaged in at our holiday meeting. Again, our Treasurer reports our solvency and indicated a moderate decline in our balance from the previous month. He told of several membership renewals having arrived and took renewals from those assembled.

Our Bulletin Board honcho reported that the ailing Kaypro 10 is again functioning. (It "fixed" itself). We now have a small supply of spare parts which came from the old K10. A suggested action to conserve lifetime on the harddisk was to use the K4 weekdays with the message base active for use and to fire up the K10 only on weekends, say from 1800(6PM) Friday to 0600(6AM) Monday, thus providing access to upload/download for programs/info. That way we would not have our drive whirling continuously with little usage. All present agreed with the plan. Mannie Quintero offered the loan of a 2400 BAUD modem, compatible with Hayes protocols, to fire up and see how much usage developed at that speed. There would have been 2400 available with the modem Hank Dickson loaned us except that it was not Hayes compatible and would have required extensive reprogramming in the CP/M environment to get running.

Our newsletter Editor, Tim, informed that he would, 99.5% probability, attend his final

meeting in January. He is doing his last edit with this issue. As usual, he announced the need for articles. He was roundly thanked for his support over these last years. Next, a call was made for volunteers to the Editorship and, amidst the vociferous and resounding silence, our long-suffering ex-editor, Mark Fisher, was dragooned into the spot. (Seems to me I did hear, however faintly, a statement that his remuneration needed increasing since he now wears both the BBS and Editor hats. We shall have to see that he gets a greater share of the cookies at our next holiday meeting.)

Corresponding secretary indicated neither input or output for the month.

In response to the announcement that for the next meeting there was no formal program as no one had come up with one, a flood of comments and suggestions came from the floor, the result of which was the decision to use the next meeting to have everyone spell out that which they were interested in and what they would like to see presented in future meetings, and, it is hoped, what they would be prepared to present. Also, discussion regarding presentation sources external to the group would be explored.

Meeting closed.

Two Book Reviews
By Tim Swenson

"The Hacker Crackdown : Law and Disorder on the Electronic Frontier" by Bruce Sterling

This book talks about the "computer underground", computer "hacking" (cracking really), and Operation SunDevil, the crackdown on computer crackers.

The book starts off by giving a history of the phone system. This seems unnecessary, but since the phone system plays a major part in the rest of the book, it does provide good background material.

The next section talks about the digital underground, who's in it, what it's made up of, and so on.

The third section is the heart of the book. It details Operation SunDevil, the crackdown on the computer underground. The whole case revolved around a document downloaded from AT&T detailing the 911 system. It was believed that with this document, crackers could crash the 911 system.

The document made it's way from computer to computer, person to person. Finally, when AT&T talked to the FBI and Secret Service, a plan was made to nab all persons that had recieved this "illegal" document. Raids were made all over the country, picking up people, computers, and almost anything electronic related.

One victim was Steve Jackson Games, a publisher of war games and role-playing games. The person (not an employee) that ran thier BBS was believed to posses the document, so the whole company was raided and all computers were removed. After many months, no charges were filed against Steve Jackson Games.

Once the key players in the theft of the 911 document went to court, it all feel apart when it was revealed that the same information

in the 911 document, plus even more detail, could be bought from the publications arm of AT&T. Needless to say the case was dropped.

This whole episode reminds us all that the merest suspicion and we might have our computers hauled off.

The book does seem a bit long winded at times, but overall its pretty good reading, and sometimes a bit scary.

"SYSLAW" by Lance Rose and Jonathan Wallace

I have not read this book, but have seen a few reviews. It goes well with the previous book. It is a book that tries to cover the laws dealing with computers.

It covers the laws as they apply to BBS operators, System Administrators of computer systems, and others. SYSLAW details the laws as they are and covers the gaps that the law does not fill. Technology advances faster than the law and SYSLAW helps point the gaps out.
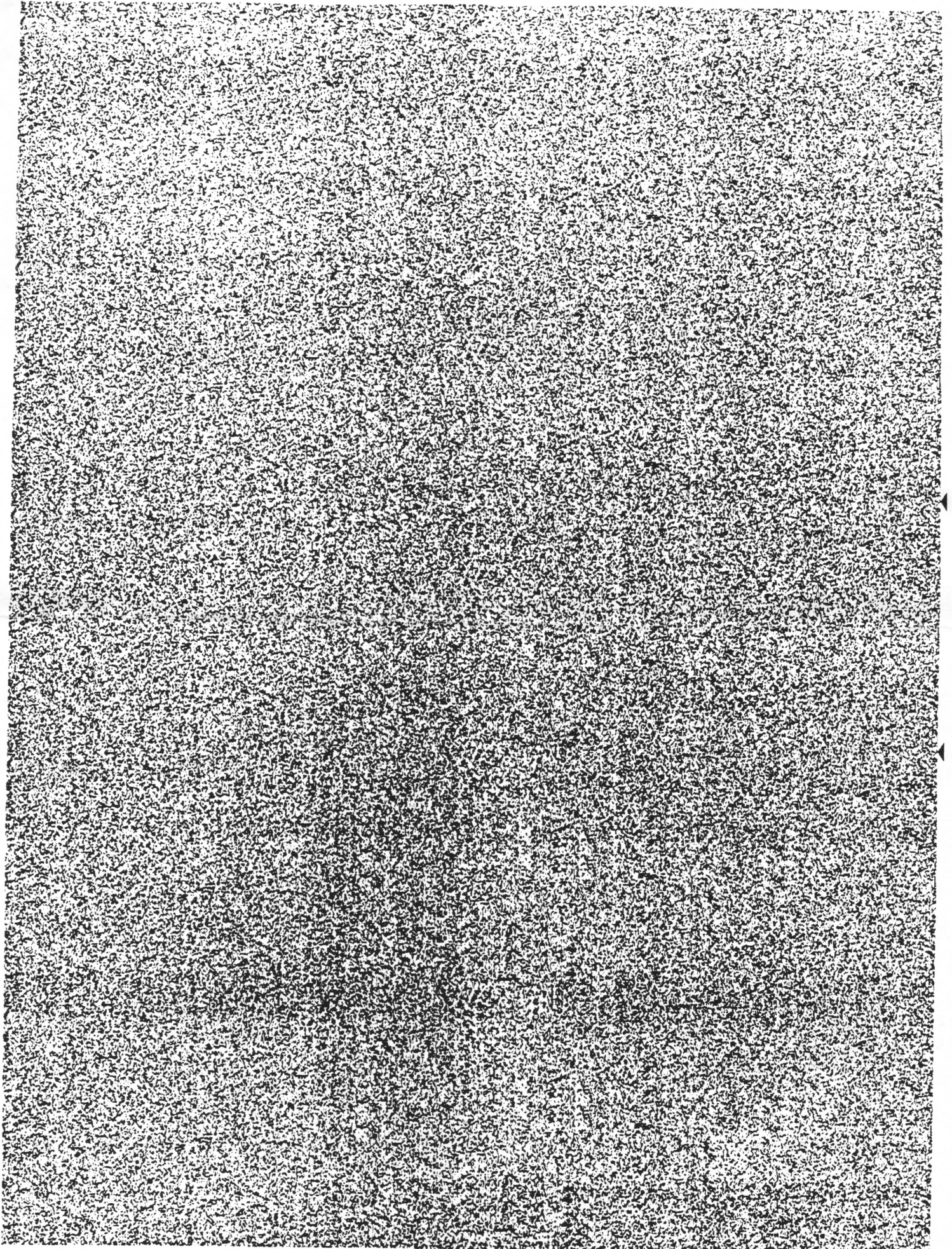
The reviews I have seen speak well of the book. It's not meant for light reading but more for finding out your rights as person in the electronic community.

It seems the book can only be bought from one source:
PC Information Group, Inc.
1125 East Broadway
Winona, MN 55987
800-321-8285 / 507-452-2824
Price is $34.95 plus $3 for shipping

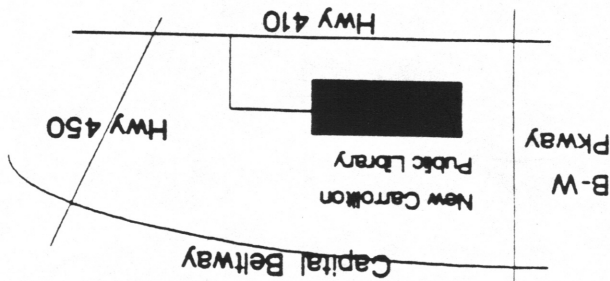I hope my local library will be getting the book so I can review it without shelling out $35.

The next meeting of CATS will be held on: January 9, 1993

11:00 AM   Hardware Workshop
2:00 PM   General Meeting

At: New Carrollton Public Library 7414 Riverdale Road (Hwy 410), New Carrollton, MD

Hwy 410

Hwy 450

New Carrollton Public Library

B-W Pkway

Capital Beltway

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The Capital Area Timex/Sinclair Users Group

The Capital Area Timex/Sinclair Users Group is a not-for-profit group devoted to serving the interests of those who own, use, or are interested in the Timex/Sinclair family of computers.

Executive Board

President	Mannie Quintero
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Recording Secretary	Open
Corresponding Secretary	Joe Miller
Treasurer	Barry Washington
Members-at-Large	

Immediate Past President
Duane Parker

Newsletter Editor & Contact Person	Tim Swenson (703)820-6657

Meetings

Monthly meetings are held from 11:00 AM to 4:30 PM, on the second Saturday of each month, at the New Carrollton Public Library.

Newsletter

Memberships cost $15 per year, are good for 12 months, and include all privileges (access to libraries, group buys, etc.). A newsletter only subscription is available for persons living outside the Washington Metro area and is $12 per year.

Networks

Timex SIG on Compuserve: Wednesday night, 10:00 PM Eastern time (GO CLUB).

QZX BBS: (505) 522-7081 FIDO net 15, node 6. East Coast dial (703) 547-4815 FIDO net 18, node 9.

CATS BBS: (301) 588-0579. 8-N-1. 300/1200 baud. News and general information, 24 hours a day.